

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 9 is currently amended, leaving claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-21 and 23 unchanged. Claims 2, 6, 11-13, 15-17, 19 and 21 were previously withdrawn and claims 3 and 22 were previously canceled.

Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Claim 9 is rejected because the term “an armature shaft” is already set forth in claim 1. Claim 9 has been amended to refer back to the armature shaft of claim 1. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 14, 18, 20 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Publication No. WO 01/61133 (Hager) in view of US 6,345,925 (Coleman).

As agreed by the Examiner, Hager does not teach the receptacles embodied as centering holes for corresponding centering pins arranged on the second housing part and the second housing part featuring counter receptacles for the connecting elements surrounded at least partially by the centering pins.

Coleman discloses a fastener 10 that includes a lower plate 12, an upper plate 14 and bolts 16 that extend through a conveyor belt 18, 20 to splice the conveyor bent ends 18 and 20 together. The lower plate 12 includes recessed apertures 30 and 32 that receive an enlarged head portion 42 of the bolts 16. Coleman does not actually disclose centering pins, although the Examiner points to semi-conical recess wall portions 94 and 96 of the recessed apertures 30 and 32 as supposed centering pins. The semi-conical recess wall portions 94 and 96 of Coleman are formed on the lower plate 12, and a through hole 38 (compared by the Examiner to a counter receptacle) is formed in the belt end 18.

In contrast, claims 1 and 23 require a first housing part connected to a second housing part by means of connecting elements, the first housing part including centering hole receptacles, and the second housing part including centering pins and counter receptacles for the connecting elements.

Further, Coleman does not teach that centering pins of a first housing part engage with receptacles of a second housing part. The semi-conical recess wall portions 94, 96 of the lower plate 12 are pressed into the flexible conveyor belt end 18, but not into the openings (30, 32, 34,

36) of the other housing part (upper plate 14). As seen in Fig 13a, washers 112 are disposed between the semi-conical recess wall portions 94, 96 and the conveyor belt 18, which prevent an insertion of the semi-conical recess wall portions 94, 96 into a corresponding opening (of the belt/ or the second housing part).

Further, Coleman teaches away from connecting two housing parts because the conveyor belt has to be elastically deformable and flexible. In contrast the two housing parts of the present application are rigid. Additionally, it is not obvious to combine a drive unit for a motor vehicle with a fastener arrangement for connecting ends of a conveyor belt. The structural requirements for a drive unit for a motor vehicle and a conveyor belt are strikingly different, and cannot be readily interchanged.

Claim 1 is additionally inventive over Coleman, because the first and second housing parts of Coleman are not assigned bearing functions for an armature shaft.

Claim 23 is additionally inventive over Coleman, because there is no hint to form the centering pins and the second housing part as one unitary piece by injection molding. Claim 23 is additionally inventive over Coleman, because there is no hint to include a centering pin which engages a corresponding receptacle of the second housing part.

For at least these reasons, Hager and Coleman, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every element of claims 1 and 23. Claims 2 and 4-21 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for these and other reasons not specifically discussed herein. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1, 2, 4-21 and 23 is respectfully requested. If additional consultation will further prosecution, the undersigned is available during normal business hours at the below-identified telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,


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Docket No. 022862-1041-00
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